

particular, Clif's insight and contribution has been invaluable on matters affecting law enforcement, national security, and management issues. Throughout his service here, Clif's unqualified professionalism, perceptiveness, great sense of humor and cool head have helped this Subcommittee and the Congress move forward on a wide range of policy and budgetary issues. His assistance in planning for and coordinating a complicated trip to the Andean countries to review the U.S. counter-narcotics assistance programs there was of particular benefit to us.

Special Agent Morehead has served me, this subcommittee, and the House well: we are sorry to see him leave, and will miss him as a colleague and as a friend. Each of us on the Treasury Appropriations Subcommittee wish Clif all the best as he resumes his Secret Service career, and expect to see great things there.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KOLBE. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would like to join the chairman of the committee in commending the work of Clif Morehead. This is an extraordinarily valuable program for the Federal Government, these exchange programs. They give the Members of various different agencies a perspective on how the Congress operates, and other agencies, but how this process works.

Clif Morehead is an extraordinary young man who has contributed a great deal to the quality of our work during the past frankly 24 months, first working in my office, where he was an invaluable asset, and then in the committee office, as well.

I want to join the chairman in commending Clif Morehead. He is an extraordinary asset of the Secret Service, and has been an outstanding asset of ours. I join with the gentleman from Arizona (Chairman KOLBE) in wishing him the very best as he returns to his position as an agent in the United States Secret Service, where I know he will continue to prove to be a valuable asset to our country.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for his kind remarks about Clif. Clif is on the floor with us today, and Clif, it is not our eulogy to you but rather a tribute to you, and we look forward to continuing to work with you.

Mr. Speaker, let me return to the conference report, if I might, and discuss for a moment some of the key parts about it.

This conference agreement provides \$13.7 billion for agencies which come under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee. That is \$240 million above the current fiscal year, an increase of less than 2 percent, but it is \$220 million below what the President requested.

I am concerned to learn there are some Members who believe that this level of funding is both excessive and unnecessary. In fact, it is neither. Just to keep pace with inflation, the administration requested an increase of \$600 million. That was before any of the initiatives, and before the mandatory requirements, such as Y2K readiness for the IRS, or workloads associated with the upcoming Presidential elections, the workload increase that will be caused during the upcoming Presidential election for the Secret Service, or for increases in the critical drug programs, such as the high-intensity drug trafficking areas or the Drug-Free Communities Act.

Mr. Speaker, a \$240 million increase barely makes a dent towards putting together a bill that meets all of our current law enforcement responsibilities.

Clearly, this subcommittee was faced with a daunting task. I can tell the Members that without this funding level, the conference report before us now would not be pretty from anyone's perspective. The fact is, anything less than what is provided in the conference report would have fallen far short of our shared goals.

Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, I know my colleagues have concerns over these funding levels. On the other hand, I know that we all support the same things. We all support IRS restructuring and reform and improving customer service for our constituents. We all support hardening the borders against drugs and illegal contraband while improving the flow of legitimate commerce. We all support keeping our children off drugs and strengthening our communities and families. Finally, we all support keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals, adult and juvenile criminals, and giving State and local law enforcement officers the tools

they need to enforce the firearms laws that we have adopted.

These are items which certainly ought not to be controversial. These are items that are funded within our conference allocation, and I think we can all agree they are not excessive, they are not unnecessary.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me address the issue of legislative items and the suggestion that somehow the conference agreement has put one over on some Members, including items which, for a variety of reasons, should not be included, or should not be in there in their present form.

Each year, this subcommittee is burdened with controversial legislative provisions that ultimately have to be negotiated in conference with the Senate. The fact is, once they are attached to the bill, we are responsible for negotiating differences with the Senate on behalf of the sponsors. So we did not put anything over on anybody in this conference report. The conferees negotiated to the best of their ability, and with nothing but the best of intentions. The conferees made every effort possible to accommodate the views of all Members, House and Senate, both sides of the aisle, on these different issues.

The agreement before us now reflects the very best intentions and the very best judgment of the conferees. I might add, it has received the unanimous and unqualified support of the House and Senate conferees. We have a bill that I believe can receive a majority of votes in both sides of the aisle, in both chambers, and one that I believe can and will be signed by the President of the United States.

I hope that, when some of my colleagues say they are threatening to vote against this measure because they disagree with the specifics of it or some of the controversial provisions, that they will reconsider that position. That would be a very shortsighted approach, and I urge Members to look at this conference report in its entirety.

This is an excellent conference agreement. It is strong on law enforcement, it is tough on drugs, and it continues our commitment to restructure and reform the IRS. I urge my colleagues to support this conference agreement.